

been urging repeatedly on our leadership—we need to complete work on the appropriations bills. They are complementary, to say the least, and they have to be done.

Under Chairman LEAHY's leadership, Democrats have put forth a responsible top-line number and subcommittee allocations that address our defense and nondefense funding needs alike. The defense funding levels in the appropriations bills are consistent with the bipartisan National Defense Authorization Act bill that we passed in the Armed Services Committee in July.

I would like to point out that the defense spending level in the Senate NDAA bill, which is pending floor action, was set by an amendment offered by my colleague, the ranking member, Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma, and supported by every Republican on the Armed Services Committee. I was pleased to work with Senator INHOFE and to co-sponsor the amendment, which provides an additional \$25 billion in funding for specific items, most of which are unfunded requirements submitted by the services and the combatant commands.

But Republicans put all this good work and all this good will we built up and established in the NDAA process in jeopardy if they force us into a year-long continuing resolution by refusing to negotiate on the 12 appropriations bills.

A yearlong CR would be shortsighted and damaging to our national defense.

First, defense spending will be about \$36 billion lower than the levels set out in the Senate's NDAA and appropriations bills.

I must also point out that, following our lead, the House Armed Services Committee passed a bill with the same top line—an additional \$25 billion. That was brought to the floor of the House. It passed. In fact, an amendment to reduce the funding was defeated.

So there is a strong bipartisan commitment to vigorously fund the Department of Defense, and if we do not do that, if we fall into the trap of a CR, as I have indicated, we will be taking money away from the Department of Defense.

Second, we will be tied, as Senator LEAHY pointed out, to funding priorities from a year ago even though circumstances have changed remarkably. As he pointed out, we have funding in last year's legislation that would provide support to Afghan forces who have been dissipated by the events of August. We would have a situation where there were significant amounts of money intended to assist Afghan security concerns that could not be effectively used and would detract from the current needs that we have.

Third, a CR would prevent DOD from effectively modernizing and reinventing and reinvesting in its programs. Since new starts—new programs—aren't allowed under a CR, DOD could be forced into funding legacy systems that are outdated and in-

efficient, and that is simply congressionally mandated waste. Meanwhile, important new initiatives and acquisitions could be delayed. For example, we may not have the ability to fund the three additional ships and the seven more Joint Strike Fighters in the Navy's 2022 budget. As we shift our focus to the Pacific, as we deal with potential contingencies involving Taiwan and other areas, it becomes a shift in the Navy. They need these platforms. They need them as soon as we can get them, and they won't be able to get them if we are stuck with a CR.

CRs are also terribly disruptive just to the normal operation of the Department of Defense and also to their partners in the private sector and academia, since CRs inject uncertainty, instability, and cost to the R&D and acquisition processes.

The impact is not just felt on the defense side of the ledger, as Chairman LEAHY pointed out. Nondefense priorities have been neglected for over a decade. This year, we finally have a chance to make up for lost time.

For example, we have a chance to double the Federal commitment to public education under the title I program and make important investments in adult education and job training.

At a time when the American people are clamoring for more mental health service, particularly for children, we have funding to help train more pediatric mental health specialists.

We also have funding to help establish a national suicide prevention lifeline and a three-digit phone number that Congress approved last year. We are in the midst, sadly, of an epidemic of suicides throughout this country, and they particularly affect, as we pointed out, veterans who have served their country with great valor and sacrifice and yet are plagued by mental health problems.

As the chairman of the Legislative Branch Subcommittee, I will note that we have funding to help the Capitol Police, who have been stretched to their limits in the aftermath of the January 6 assault on this Capitol. In the Senate bill, we have funding for new officers, overtime and retention payments, as well as resources for officer wellness and mental health support. After what they have done for us, literally saving us, we owe it to the men and women of the Capitol Police to provide this assistance. It cannot be done under a continuing resolution.

Chairman LEAHY has bent over backwards to engage our Republican colleagues, and we have to engage. We have to move forward. He is willing to do that, but we have not seen a comparable response from the other side. It is time to get down to business, the business of the American people. It is time to provide our military with the resources and the priorities for today, not for last year. It is time to recognize the emerging problems in this country of this moment, not of the past.

We need our colleagues on the Republican side to come to the table, not with preconditions and redlines but a willingness to negotiate on behalf of all the American people. Otherwise, we will risk a continuing resolution that will harm everyone, all the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I thank the distinguished chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee for his comments.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

#### BUILD BACK BETTER AGENDA

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, Democrats are closer than we have ever been to finalizing and passing legislation to achieve President Biden's Build Back Better agenda. We have made great progress since the President announced his framework last week, including by coming to an agreement that will, for the first time ever, empower Medicare to directly negotiate prices in Part B and Part D and lower prices for millions of seniors and American families.

We will also cap out-of-pocket expenses at \$2,000 a year, and our agreement will make it so Americans with diabetes don't pay more than \$35 per month on insulin. One of the great confounding mysteries over the last several years is, how did insulin—a drug that has been on the market for years and years and years; there is no patent—end up costing \$600 a dose for people who can barely afford it? Diabetes affects so many people, and yet they have to pay all of this money.

So, as the House prepares to move forward, the Senate continues to achieve progress in our goal of passing Build Back Better before Thanksgiving. That is our goal. We are moving forward because the challenges American families and workers are facing are enormous, and President Biden's agenda has many things that will lower costs and help families pay the bills—lower costs and help families pay the bills.

Take childcare, for instance. Families sometimes pay more than \$10,000 a year for a child just to take care of him—a truly backbreaking expense. Secretary Yellen warned that the slack